

Record

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SBC leaders to speak at Evang. Conf.

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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The 2008 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference will kick off on the evening of January 20 at Emmanuel Church, Grenada, with a special 5 p.m. praise and worship service featuring Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) immediate past president Bobby Welch.

The SBC's current president, Frank Page, pastor of First Church, Taylors, S.C., is also scheduled to speak at the conference.

Welch, who pastored First Church, Daytona Beach, Fl., for 32 years before retiring last year, currently serves as strategist for global evangelical relations with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee in Nashville. Page is in his second term as SBC president.

Other featured speakers include:

- John Avant, pastor of First Church, West Monroe, La., and former vice-president for evangelization at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga.

- Roy Fish, retired professor of evangelism at Southwestern Seminary and namesake of the Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions at Southwestern.

- Brain Fossett, president of Fossett Evangelistic Ministries in Dalton, Ga., and current president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists.

- Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

- Sammy Gilbreath, director of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions in Montgomery.

"God has put together an outstanding lineup of people for the Evangelism Conference who have a passion for reaching this generation for Christ," said Don Lum, evangelism director at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and conference coordinator.

"Bobby Welch is a motivator who authored the FAITH curriculum and never hesitates to share his faith. Roy Fish is every pastor's professor, and one of our greatest living statesmen. Brian Fossett has a tremendous testimony and is driven to see effective revivals start across our convention.

"John Avant has crossed the globe carrying the Gospel to the unsaved, and Sammy Gilbreath

has a clear focus on bringing the lost to Jesus. Jim Futral's preaching and walk with the Lord have inspired thousands of believers both in Mississippi and around the world," Lum said.

The ministers of music and choirs of North Central Association, which is headquartered in Grenada, are coordinating the praise and worship portions of the conference. "I'm excited about all the great music we're going to hear during the conference," Lum said.

An evangelism dinner hosted by Emmanuel Church will be held from 5-6:30 p.m. on January 21. There is no charge for the dinner, and all conference attendees are invited to participate.

A number of associated events are also planned:

- Crossover Grenada will be conducted on January 19, with local churches partnering to visit as many homes as possible before the Evangelism Conference convenes.

"The majority of the churches of North Central Association are participating in their first Crossover," said Lowell Ingram, missions director for North Central Association. "Three thousand and five hundred packets containing one copy each of The Hope DVD, Here's Hope New Testament, The Way Gospel tract, and The Baptist Faith and Message, along with a letter of greeting from the individual church, will be distributed to households in Grenada and Tallahatchie counties.

"Plans are to conduct prayer rides/walks through the areas scheduled to receive the packets on January 13 with the packets delivered during the following week, culminating on January 19.

"The original goal of 1000 packets set by our evangelism committee has been far exceeded due to the grace and leadership of God's Holy Spirit."

The Time is Now!

STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE 2008

JANUARY 20-22, 2008

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada

Schedule

SUNDAY EVENING Praise and Worship begins at 5:00 p.m. Featured speaker for the evening is Bobby Welch	3:45-4:00 p.m. Praise and Worship 4:00-4:45 p.m. Roy Fish 5:00-6:30 p.m. Evangelism Dinner, Jim Futral
MONDAY MORNING 9:15-9:30 a.m. Praise and Worship 9:30-9:40 a.m. Welcome 9:40-10:25 a.m. Brian Fossett 10:25-10:40 a.m. Praise and Worship 10:40-11:30 a.m. John Avant 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Break for Lunch	MONDAY EVENING 6:30-6:45 p.m. Praise and Worship 6:45-7:40 p.m. Sammy Gilbreath 7:40-8:00 p.m. Praise and Worship 8:00-8:55 p.m. Frank Page
MONDAY AFTERNOON 1:30-2:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions 2:30-2:45 p.m. Break 2:45-3:00 p.m. Praise and Worship 3:00-3:45 p.m. Frank Page	TUESDAY MORNING - Senior Adult Rally 8:00-11:45 a.m. Phil Walker Bill Patterson Cindy Stoll Bobby Shows Russell Newport John Avant

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, Mississippi 39205 • www.mbc.org

- A State Prayer Summit will also be held beginning at 9 a.m. on January 19 at Emmanuel Church, sponsored by the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (wMu).

Lunch will be served for \$5 per person, and the summit will adjourn at 2:45 p.m.

Speakers include Caroline Jones, national prayer leader for wMu, and Kevin Meador, president of The Prayer Closet Ministries, Inc., in Decatur.

- The State Senior Adult Evangelism Rally will take place at Emmanuel Church on January 22, from 8-11:45 a.m. John Avant will be the speaker and Russell Newport, longtime SBC music minister and Christian recording artist, will lead praise and worship.

"This rally each year is always one of the highlights of my 12 years at MBCB. It really reaches the inner soul of our

seniors," said Glenn Shows, senior adult consultant in the MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministry Department and coordinator of the rally.

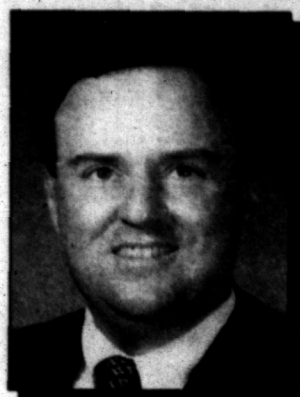
"It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that the 2008 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference and associated meetings are a 'can't miss' event. The Lord is going to bless our gathering together for this special time," Lum said.

The Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference is supported each year by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. There is no admission charge.

For more information, contact the Evangelism Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-mail: jellis@mbcb.org.



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A modern City of Brass

As the Year of Our Lord 2008-dawns, the United States prepares for a change of leadership as it does every two, four, and six years. Congressmen (and women) come and go while senators governors rise and fall, but nothing captures our dreams and anxieties for the future as do presidential elections.

Although our Founding Fathers in their wisdom mandated an elected president with limited powers rather than an all-powerful king, Americans still tend to regard the holder of the office as imperial.

Too many Americans, in fact, look upon the presidency as the one office — and the holder of that office as the one person — who can “turn the country around.” The politicians who aspire to the office are only too happy to make such promises.

True, the President of the United States has a tremendous opportunity to influence the direction of the country for either good or evil. He (or possibly “she,” some day) is our leader and deserves our prayers. He can and should appeal to our best characteristics, and he should lead by example.

However, no one person alone can halt the moral and spiritual decline in which this great country has willingly indulged for many years. That is up to each and every one of us, and especially so where Christian leadership is concerned.

There are many biblical and historical examples of countries that turned their backs on God. From the discipline of letters also comes a clear snapshot of where we are headed. British poet Rudyard Kipling, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, wrote the City of Brass nearly 100 years ago. The poem describes an ancient culture of Kipling's creation that threw off their God-given heritage for the momentary pleasures of the world and was eventually destroyed by its own excesses. Excerpts include:

*When the wine stirred in their heart
their bosoms dilated,*



*They rose to suppose themselves kings
over all things created;
To decree a new earth at a birth without
labour or sorrow;
To declare: “We prepare it today and
inherit it tomorrow...”*

*Swiftly these pulled down the walls
that their fathers had made them,
The impregnable ramparts of old,
they razed and relaid them...*

*They replied to their well-wishers' fears,
to their enemies' laughter,
Saying: “Peace! We have fashioned a god
which shall save us hereafter...
They said: “Who is irked by the Law?
Though we may not remove it,
If he lend us his aid in this raid,*

*we will set him above it!”
So the robber did judgment again
upon such as displeased him,
The slayer, too, boasted his slain,
and the judges released him.*

And finally, tragically:

*They ran panting in haste to lay waste
and embitter for ever
The wellsprings of Wisdom and Strength
which are Faith and Endeavour.
They nosed out and dugged up and
dragged forth and exposed to derision
All doctrine of purpose and worth
and restraint and prevision:
And it ceased, and God granted them
all things for which they had striven,
And the heart of a beast in the place
of a man's heart was given...*

*When they were fullest of wine
and most flagrant in error,
Out of the sea rose a sign,
out of Heaven a terror.
Then they saw, then they heard, then
they knew for none troubled to hide it,
There was no need of a steed
nor a lance to pursue them;
It was decreed their own deed,
and not chance, should undo them.
The tares they had laughingly sown
were ripe to the reaping.
The trust they had leagued to disown
was removed from their keeping.
The eaters of other men's bread,
the exempted from hardship,
The excusers of impotence fled,
abdicating their wardship,
For the hate they had taught through the State
brought the State no defender,
And it passed from the roll of the Nations
in headlong surrender!*

People don't change much in 100 years, or 2,000 years, or 5,000 years. Such will be our fate if we fail to turn from our evil, self-centered ways and return to the God who created us. As we embark on a new year of yet another series of great changes in our nation's history, we would do well to remember Kipling's words — and pray.

GUEST OPINION:

A rising tide of Calvinism?

By Frank Page, president
Southern Baptist Convention

naries identify themselves as five-point Calvinists.

The LifeWay study concluded:
• Calvinist-led churches are in the minority, though the number is increasing.

• Calvinism is on the rise among recent seminary graduates. If present trends continue, Calvinism will continue to grow as an influence in our convention.

• Calvinist-led churches are generally smaller in worship attendance and annual baptisms than non-Calvinist churches.

• Church growth statistics in terms of annual baptism rates indicates there is little differ-

ence between Calvinist and non-Calvinist led churches.

Where does all this take us in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)?

Most everyone who knows me knows that I am not a Calvinist. However, I have made it clear that I would be fair to those who are Calvinists in appointments in our convention. I have been true to my word.

I believe that the issue of Calvinism is one that can be discussed within the family of Southern Baptists. I believe we need to have honest, open dialogue.

I also want to ask our seminarians, our churches, and current pastors to be quite honest with their congregations. In fact, former SBC President Paige Patterson, now president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, made perhaps the most practical of all suggestions in this regard. When seminarians are dealing with pastor search committees, he said, they need to be very honest about where they stand theologically in this, and in every area.

When pastor search committees approach pastors and seminary graduates about possible positions, they need to be very honest with these individuals about what they will allow regarding teaching in this area.

This requires Southern Baptists to be quite aware concerning the issues in Calvinism, and non-Calvinism. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all Southern Baptists that we study the Word of God clearly to see what it says about the salvation given to us, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us be peaceful, Christ-like in our discussions, but let us be diligent in our study.

CWJC celebrating milestone anniversary

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP and local reports) — In 10 years, the Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) has grown to 192 training sites, added a men's program, and in 2006 alone, assisted more than 2,100 individuals through the efforts of 15,000 volunteers.

The CWJC's 10th anniversary was a key component of the Live the Joy of Missions conference sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union (wMu) and attended by more than 825 women from 35 states and Puerto Rico.

The Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps (CWJC/CMJC) ministry seeks to equip women and men for life and employment through Christ-centered, holistic training.

"CWJC provides an avenue where we are able to share the love of Jesus in a very tangible way with job and life skills," said Sandra Nash of Clinton, Mississippi CWJC coordinator.

"In Mississippi we have eight CWJC sites which are ministering to participants with several other locations in the process. Our longest active site is in Lee Association, where they will soon celebrate 10 years of operation.

"We are thankful for the support we receive from Southern Baptists; each site is dependent on their community for operating funds and volunteers. CWJC is a volunteer driven ministry where mentors, pray-ers, and many other types of volunteers are needed. Anyone interested in getting involved may contact me at snnash@comcast.net.

"We are thankful for the inclusion of CWJC in our Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering. The allocated funds are used for advancement and educational support of the sites. We are praying for some men to be willing to start a Christian Men's Job Corps site in our state," Nash said.

"As the ministry has grown, one of the questions we are frequently asked is, 'What makes CWJC different from other job training programs?' said Mississippi wMu consultant Tammy Anderson. "We enjoy answering this question, because our program offers life skill and job skill training in a Christian environment where every participant is involved in Bible study and is assigned a Christian woman mentor.

"Women ministering to women is the heartbeat of CWJC. Anderson recommended that individuals, groups, churches, and associations adopt a CWJC site near them.

"There are many ways to volunteer and support CWJC. Since every site is unique, we encourage volunteers to contact the sites directly to inquire about needs and volunteer opportunities," she said.

A list of Mississippi CWJC sites is available by contacting the wMu office toll-free at

(800) 748-1651, ext. 317, or <http://mbcb.org/download/wmu/CWJC.pdf>

Symbolizing the lives changed by CWJC is Gabrielle Harbin of New Market, Ala., who received the Sybil Bentley Dove Award honoring a current or former participant who has advanced herself through life skills, academic development, and faith in God.

Harbin, a December 2006 graduate of CWJC of Madison County, Inc. (Ala.), also received a grant that accompanies the award to assist her in her educational and career goals.

Since completing the wMu-sponsored job corps program last year, Harbin has earned an associate's degree in business management from American Intercontinental University and begun work on a bachelor's degree in visual communication, with the goal of starting her own magazine and writing encouraging and empowering articles for women.

Harbin teaches fourth-grade girls Sunday School at The Rock Family Worship Center in Huntsville.

"This award is given to a woman who embodies the spirit and hope of Christian Women's Job Corps," said Jean Cullen, wMu ministry consultant and coordinator of CWJC/CMJC. "Gabrielle is a testimony to this. Her courage and perseverance to become who God has called her to be is an example to every woman."

Symbolizing the volunteers, two CWJC sites were honored: Beauregard CWJC in Louisiana and CWJC of Raleigh Association in North Carolina.

Each site will receive a \$750 grant to strengthen their ministries from the CWJC/CMJC Site Award Endowment managed by the wMu Foundation.

Mary Koehn, site coordinator for Beauregard CWJC, said the grant will be used to upgrade its computer lab. Pat Bryan, site coordinator of CWJC of Raleigh, said the funding will be designated for training of mentors and for Bibles, Bible study materials, and other resources for participants.

Joy of Missions participants were the hands and feet of Christ as they tackled some 20 different mission projects in the greater Little Rock area during one afternoon of the four-day gathering. Avenues for service included:

- prayerwalking downtown North Little Rock, apartment complexes, fire and police stations and the state capitol
- surveying unchurched areas.
- visiting nursing homes to give manicures and pray with residents.
- reading to elementary school children.
- helping out in area ministries such as the Ronald McDonald House and The Rice Depot, a food bank ministry that serves the state of Arkansas.

During that evening's session, Emil Turner, executive



PITCHING IN — Wanda Lee (right) executive director of Woman's Missionary Union (wMu) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Kaye Miller, wMu president, join in an afternoon of community ministry during wMu's Live the Joy of Missions conference in Little Rock. (BP photo)

director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, told the women, "Thank you for your impact on central Arkansas today. ...You have touched lives. You have changed eternities. ...Because of you, less people will go to hell and more people will go to heaven."

"Thank you for loving our city," said Kaye Miller, national wMu and member of host Immanuel Church, at the conclusion of the conference. "Missions isn't an option. The Great Commission is a mandate. We pray that as you leave here you will go back to your place of service — your mission fields — and love your neighbor."

About 100 topics were cov-

ered during nine workshop times throughout the conference, with some led in Spanish and Korean. Additional features of the sessions included a WorldCrafts Village bookstore; the second annual wMu golf tournament; and the presentation of a prayer quilt by Native American wMu members from Oklahoma.

The quilt will be displayed in the Native American room at the wMu headquarters in Birmingham, Al.

Geoff Hammond, president of the North American Mission Board, told the wMu audience, "Nobody knows how to love and pray like godly women. I pray you will leave this meeting praying more."

Looking back

10 years ago

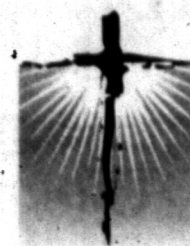
A 34% increase in student conversions highlights the 197 Southern Baptist Student Ministry Report shared Dec. 2 with state student directors gathered in Nashville for their annual planning meeting.

20 years ago

West End Church, West Point, burns to the ground following a gas explosion. The building is completely destroyed in about one hour. The building was constructed in 1953 and was currently undergoing renovations. Jim Carr, pastor.

50 years ago

Wake Forest College trustees reject a motion that the Baptist-affiliated college in North Carolina permit supervised on-campus dancing despite recent action of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritu-
al guidance.

WELCOME 2008!

Where in the world did the
time go? It seems like only yes-
terday that we were all gearing
up for Y2K and the end of the
world. Machines were going to
stop, traffic was going to be
clogged, banks were going to
close, the economy all around
the world was going to collapse,
and there was a possibility that
your car would not crank. None
of those things happened but
we were all hearing the barrage
of catastrophes that were com-
ing. Now it is 2008 and we are
all off on a new venture into a
new uncharted year.

Time is a fascinating thing.
The more you look at it the
more you wonder what it is and
how it actually works. Every
one of us gets the same amount
of it each day and for the most
part, we never get enough of it.
For one person, their 24 hours
each day has to be utilized to
run the most powerful govern-
ment on the planet while another
person gets the same time to
take care of some personal
needs, read the paper, and
watch what Oprah has to say in
the afternoon. Here we are at
the very beginning of a brand
new year, a fresh, untouched,
and unscarred new year. This
one is really special in that
while most years contain
525,600 minutes, the one we
have received contains 527,040
minutes. It is leap year.

There is something special
about a new beginning. While I
wrote that this New Year is not
scarred or marred, that may not
be totally true because some-
times actions that we took in



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

2007, or 2006, or maybe in the
1900s, have far-reaching impli-
cations to mess up our brand
New Year. Let me suggest to
you as you launch into the New
Year some things that you might
want to do that will help 2008
not only be better but to be filled
with hope and God-honoring,
people-blessing prospects.

Celebrate in '08. The
Scripture says, "This is the day
that the Lord has made; let us
rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps.
118:24). I do not want to do any
injustice to the Scripture but
stretch that out and approach
'08 as though you understand
that, "This is the year which
the Lord has made; we will
rejoice and be glad in it." With
each day, every new sunrise,
each week and month, the year
2008 will become what we
make it. It will be what we
allow God to work in us and
create it to be, and so at the
very beginning of this year cel-
ebrate the fact that God has
given you this timeframe and
in turn give Him your best.

Concentrate in '08. When I
say concentrate, I want to
encourage you to give yourself
over to two significant spiritual
exercises. The first is to concen-
trate on prayer. Jesus taught

His disciples to pray. It was His
response to their desire to
know how to pray. They said,
"Lord, teach us to pray." Some
of you who are sports fans will
remember months ago when a
little school called Appalachian
State played the huge Michigan
football team on a Saturday
afternoon and shook the sports
world by beating the Giants.
Many sports writers said that it
was the greatest upset in the
history of collegiate football. It
well may have been and people
will long be talking about it.

One of the interesting
things that came out of that
had nothing to do with foot-
ball *per se*. The coach of the
Appalachian team is a man by
the name of Jerry Moore who
is a Christian and daily walks
with God. Speaking of his
prayer and devotional life, he
told in a testimony how he
begins each day with the
Lord. Moore said he never
wants to see the face of a man
until he has seen the face of
the King. That, my friends, is
good stuff and whether you
are heading out to teach
school, to try a case, to preach
a sermon, drive a truck, or to
meet with patients, it will
alter your life and make a dif-
ference in the lives of others.

Concentrate in '08 not only
on prayer but also on Bible read-
ing. I want to encourage you to
read the Bible through in this
new year. There are a number of
ways that you can go about it,
including reading from Genesis
to Revelation covering about
five or six chapters a day, which
will almost get you through the
Bible. You can also find plans
that are available to read part
of the Old Testament and part
of the New Testament each day.
You can even purchase Bibles
that are set up for each day with
selected Bible readings and a
brief devotion. It takes disci-
pline and consistency but the
rewards are tremendous.

Cremate in '08. Of course,
what I am talking about here is
not the choice you may have at
your death but to cremate a
number of things that you have
with you that you do not need
to carry all year long. There are

some things that you do not
need to keep with you. They
may be leftover piles of stuff
from last year or maybe even
years before that you have kept
in your life's closet. All they are
is a burden to drag along day
after day. They may be disap-
pointments or hurts. They may
be things that cause disillusion-
ment or distress. The reality is
that you may have things that
you cannot do anything about
except let them go. Is it easy?
Absolutely not and that is the
reason most of us keep on car-
rying the junk. It can be done. I
say cremate but I suppose the
biblical word and a word that
only God can implement in
your life, ultimately and ongo-
ing, is forgiveness.

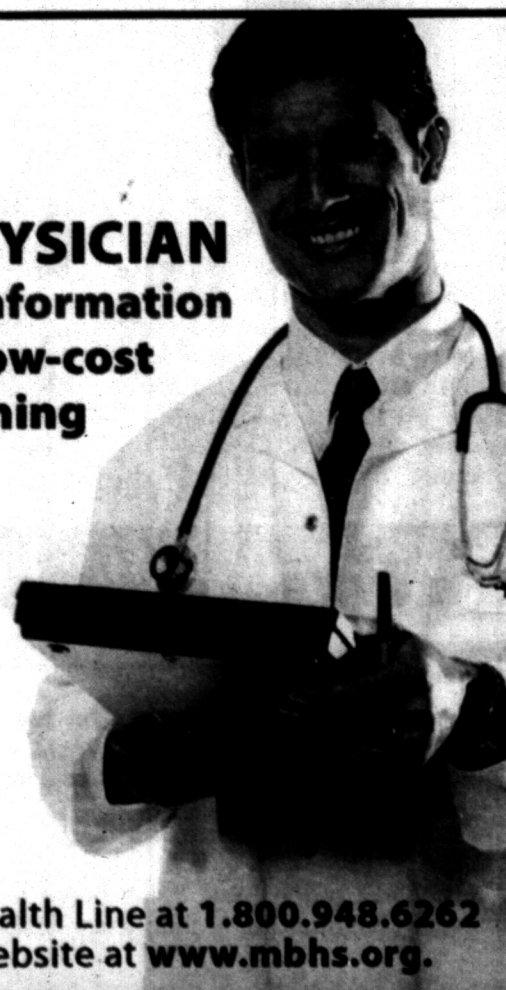
All my life, including in
recent days, I have heard peo-
ple talk about the struggles to
forgive and forget. The real
struggle is to forgive. It means
to remove, not to bring it up
again. As God does with us
when He forgives us, He casts
our sins as far as the east is
from the west and buries them
in the depths of the sea, never
to remember them against us
again. Someone once said that
to forgive has three implied
promises: One is the promise
that I will never bring it up to
you again. Two is the promise
that I will never bring it up to
anyone again. Three is the
promise that I will never bring
it up to myself again.

Some of you may have
lived long enough that you
can remember vaguely some-
thing that happened in your
life that at the time it was so
vivid and so incredible that
you never ever thought you
would forget the moment, all
of the feelings, and all of the
raw emotions that you experi-
enced. You found out that in
time it is hard to recall all of
the pieces that were part of
that moment. While time may
have a healing affect, it is not
nearly as potent as biblical for-
giveness. Not only that, but I
can promise you that if you do
not cremate, if you do not for-
give, and if you do not let
some things go, you will live
them and relive them and
keep all of the raw pain and
bitterness updated and alive
in 2008. That is not necessary.

Well, here we are sitting on
the front edge of 2008. Just keep
an eye on it, for what it will
become is what you will allow
the Lord to make it through you.

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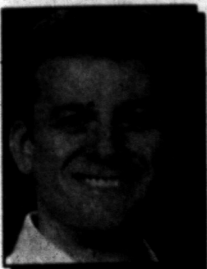
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Analysis: Archaeology doesn't support Mormons

Third in a series

By Mike Licona
Correspondent



Licona

The Mormons at your door will tell you that many findings within archaeology have confirmed the Book of Mormon time and time again. Is this true? What does the historical data we have tell us about the events recorded in the Book of Mormon?

What Mormon archaeologists say

Brigham Young University (BYU) is owned by the Mormon Church and has a department of professional archaeologists who are dedicated to archaeology as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. These professionals, who are practicing Mormons, are to be applauded for their honesty.

What many of them have to say will be a shock to the lay Mormon who is unaware that archaeology and the Book of Mormon are at odds with one another. The lay Mormon is told by the Mormon Church that archaeology continues to confirm the Book of Mormon,

while Mormon scholars, who actually study archaeology for a living, have something quite different to say:

- "[It appears that the Book of Mormon] had no place in the New World whatsoever. ... [It] just doesn't seem to fit anything ... in anthropology [or] history. ... It seems misplaced" (Dr. Ray Metheny, Professor of Anthropology, BYU. Address at the Sixth Annual Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake City, 8/25/84.)

- "The first myth that we need to eliminate is that Book of Mormon archaeology exists. Titles on books full of archaeological half-truths, dilettante on the peripheries of American archaeology calling themselves Book of Mormon archaeologists regardless of their education, and a Department of Archaeology at BYU devoted to the production of Book of Mormon archaeologists do not insure that Book of Mormon archaeology really exists." (Dr. Dee Green, Former Editor of the University Archaeological Society Newsletter, Book of Mormon Archaeology: The Myths and the Alternatives, in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, 4, No. 2 (Summer 1969), pp. 77-78.)

- "What I would say to you is there is no archeological proof of the Book of Mormon. You can look all you want.

And there's been a lot of speculation about it. There've been books written by Mormon scholars saying that 'this event took place here' or 'this event took place here.' But that's entirely speculative. There is absolutely no archeological evidence that you can tie directly to events that took place." (Dr. David Johnson, Professor of Anthropology, BYU. In a personal telephone conversation, 7/23/97.)

- "Now, I'm an archeologist, and I work in Mexico where some people think that the events occurred. So a lot of Mormons ask me every week if I find any evidence. And I tell them, 'No.' ... [T]he question of how to translate what the Book says in terms of real evidence that we can grab in our hands, archeologically, is still a huge problem" (Dr. John Clark, Professor of Anthropology, BYU. In a personal telephone conversation, 7/25/97.)

Keep in mind that all of these are practicing Mormons who are professional Book of Mormon archeologists!

What non-Mormon Archeologists say

Last week we read from the Smithsonian Institution's statement, The Bible as History. We saw that archaeology confirms much of the Bible and that professional archeologists use the Bible in their work. The Smithsonian

also has a Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon. Here is the first of eight statements:

The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.

In 1989, Michael Ammons wrote to the National Geographic Society requesting information on the Book of Mormon and archaeology. The Society replied in a letter dated April 26, 1989:

Neither the Society nor any other institution of equal prestige has ever used the Book of Mormon in locating archaeological sites. Although many Mormon sources claim that the Book of Mormon has been substantiated by archaeological findings, this claim has not been verified scientifically.

Some Mormons will respond that these archeologists do not represent the official church position, so their opinions are not credible — but why trivialize and dismiss the findings of the overwhelming consensus of practicing Mormons who are professional archaeologists, yet accept, without question, the official Mormon Church position?

Could it be that the ground's silence is indicative of a Mormon Church position that is false? After all, if it is false, silence from archaeology is precisely what we might expect to find.

In the previous part of this series we saw that the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts in our possession today allow us to have an accurate translation of the Bible. Therefore, even by Mormon standards, we can be confident that we have the Word of God.

We also saw that secular history has attested to the accuracy of the Bible so that we can know with certainty that many of the events recorded in it took place. Unfortunately, the Mormon cannot have this same confidence when it comes to the Book of Mormon.

Archaeology and secular history are silent when asked if the events took place. Not only is this silence disturbing to professional Mormon archaeologists, but it is evidence against Mormonism when no artifacts turn up in areas which should be abundant with relics.

Licona is director of apologetics and interfaith evangelism at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga. This article has been edited for length. For full article with endnotes and references, visit <http://www.sbc Baptist Press.org/BPnews.asp?ID=27052>. Licona's analysis appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Read additional free articles on Mormonism and related topics at www.4truth.net.

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2. Trosper and family



3. Hancock and family

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1. **Gillsburg Church,** Gillsburg, has called Chris Teasley as pastor. Shown are Teasley, wife Jenny, and son Joseph.

2. **Scotland Church, Winona,** has called Paul M. Trosper as pastor. He previously served as minister of students at several other churches, and holds degrees from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife Katrina have two sons, Gabriel and Caleb.

3. **Wheeler Church, Wheeler,** has called Johnny Hancock as pastor effective Nov. 11. He is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary, and comes from Rienzi Church, Rienzi, with his wife Ginger and children, Katie and Carson.

4. **Central Church, Brookhaven,** has called Ryan Thurman as pastor. He is a graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, William Carey College, and New Orleans Seminary. He

and his wife have one daughter, Ashlyn.



4. Thurman and family

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. The feature is hopefully designed to further honor with tact and respect those who have and have been special to our special friends.

DEC. 4-DEC. 17, 2007

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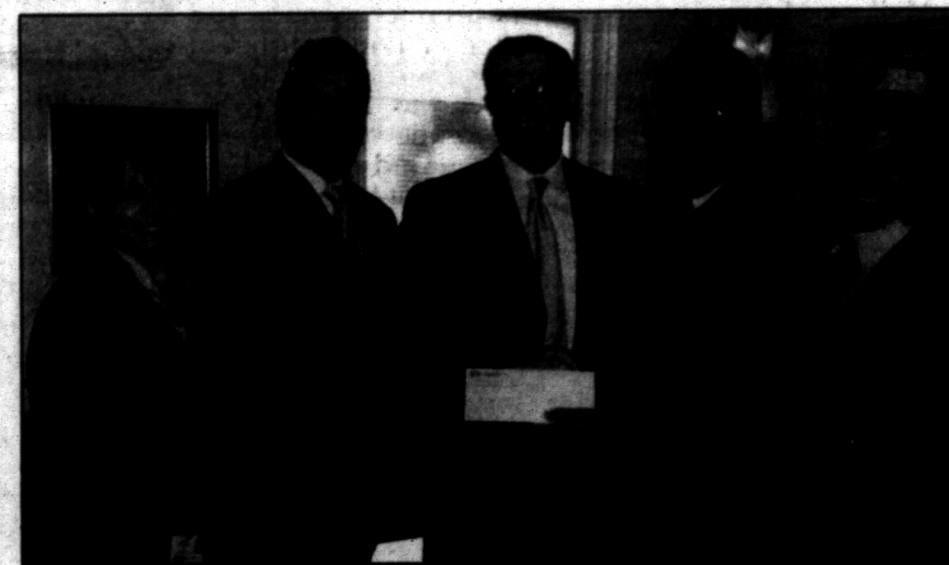
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The employees of Nissan North America in Canton collected toys for The Baptist Children's Village and several other non-profit organizations. They also provided Nissan t-shirts for all the BCV teenagers.



Members of New Galilean Church, Jackson, delivered apples and oranges for the children to enjoy during the Christmas season.



Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Finance and Pricing departments chose to collect funds matched by the company for The Baptist Children's Village as their Christmas charity project. BCBS of Mississippi employees presented their generous donation to Rory Lee, BCV Executive Director.



Compliments of Mississippi College, Sodexo, Inc., MC's food services management, served and prepared a very special meal to honor the staff of The Baptist Children's Village. The staff dined in Anderson Hall located in the B.C. Rogers Student Center on the campus of Mississippi College.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Breakthrough in Focus

Psalm 145:1-21

By Andy Vaughn

The challenge of being focused on God while seeking purpose in life is common to all people. Staying focused is a must for those that desire to reach specific goals and accomplish the tasks set before them. Students are challenged to focus on their studies while working extra hours to pay the bills, employees focus on productivity and marketability while jobs around them are being cut, and a married couple focuses on their relationship while managing their career and household. Staying focused is a challenge in today's busy world!

Scripture describes David as a man who was able to accomplish much in his life. He wrote approximately 73 of the 150 Psalms. David was select-

ed by God to replace Saul as the king of Israel, and then defeated Goliath "in the name of the Lord of hosts" rather than in his own personal strength. Saul intended to kill David out of pure jealousy and rage, but David was able to escape the onslaught of Saul.

Acts 13:22 describes David as, "A man after the heart of God." David's focus was definitely on God, but his intense focus on God did not go unchallenged. David is also described as a man who committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba. There were times when David was completely focused and enjoyed the victory. Then there were other times when David lost focus and suffered a defeat. David is a man that many people can identify with while attempting to keep



Vaughn

focused on God and pursuing purpose in life.

Today, Christians are challenged with keeping their focus on God and what He intends for them. Consider the question, "With so many things pulling at me, what should I focus on?"

Psalm 145 identifies several attributes of God that Christians must focus on so that they can more fully experience God's purpose for their life.

Psalm 145:2-3 (NASB) says, "Every day I will bless Thee, and I will praise Thy name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." David focused on the power of God and praised Him for His power. If someone desires to experience God's purpose in their life they must walk with an attitude of praise to the name of the God who is great and worthy of praise.

People easily get overwhelmed with the problems and details of life; keep in mind that

God's power is above all things we face. The purpose to which a person sets the pace of their life is not to be praised, but all praise is due to God who is the master designer of the purposes for one to walk by. Only God is worthy of praise in His greatness!

Verses 1-7 exemplify David's praise to God for His awesome power. Notice how David is not alone in praising God especially in verses four, six, and seven. Generations passed this praise of God to the next while others shouted joyfully of God's righteousness to others. God's word encourages us not to bottle up our praise of God for self, but to let it flow freely through our life for others to experience.

Another attribute of God that demands our focus is His character. Psalm 145:13 (NASB) states, "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endures throughout all generations." Grace, lovingkindness, mercy, and glory are characteristics of God that are eternal and enduring. All too often, people will focus on a specific purpose more than they

will on the character of God that should drive the purpose. Focus on God's character is a must for those that desire to discover God's purpose in life. God's character will shape the purposes of those who seek His purpose in life.

Psalm 145:14 (NASB) says, "The Lord sustains all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down." The focus of one's attention must keep in mind the provisions of God. Verses 14-21 show that God provides for those who fall down, he feeds those who look to Him, He answers prayers and protects. God's provisions must be a focal point for those that seek to praise Him in His purposes for life.

Staying focused on God while seeking His purpose in life is definitely a challenge. Scripture encourages Christians to focus on God's power, character, and provisions while allowing Him to work His purposes in our lives.

Vaughn is pastor of First Church, Fulton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

God's Purposes Trump Human Pride

Genesis 11: 1-9, 27-32

By Melleen Moore

Happy New Year is an appropriate greeting as we begin 2008. The year will hold challenges and opportunities for each of us as we choose to follow God's leading.

Ignoring the clear teachings of scripture, multitudes are convinced they know what is best for them and stubbornly chart their own course through life. They view as nonsense the notion that God has purposes. He wants to accomplish through them. Their approach to life is basically self-centered and pride-driven. Nevertheless, God is sovereign and will carry out His divine purposes whether people resist Him or obey Him. He desires people to organize their lives around His purposes.

Chapter 11 of Genesis comes chronologically before chapter 10. Chapter 10 records a dis-

persion or people and their having different languages, and 11:1 refers to a time when everyone spoke the same language and resisted dispersing according to God's purpose.

Chapter 10 is known as the Table of Nations, all growing from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem's descendants were called Semites. Abraham, David, and Jesus descended from Shem. Ham's descendants settled in Canaan, Egypt, and the rest of Africa. Japheth's descendants settled for the most part in Europe and Asia Minor.

Genesis 10:8-12 deals with Nimrod. Not much is known about him, other than he was a powerful man, the first of kings, blessed of God, and a mighty hunter. Even those blessed of God, however, can go astray. In Nimrod's case, some scholars



Moore

suggest that he was the founder of the great, godless Babylonian empire, which is current day Iraq. Verses 11 and 12 speak of some of his building projects. It may be possible that he used his religion to unite people for his own political purposes, as seen in the next chapter.

Pride Resists God's Purpose, Genesis 11: 1-4

As Noah's family followed God's command to be 'fruitful and multiply,' communication was simple in that the "whole earth was of one language and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1 KJV). This idea of one language sounds "too good to be true" and it was. God's command to inhabit the whole earth gives richness and diversity to life. With time the descendants of Noah's sons moved east and dwelt in the land of Shinar, modern day Iraq. Dwell or settle suggest the idea of plans to stay in the land. However, God's intent was to "replenish the earth" (Gen 9:1). To settle in the

land brought about construction plans. The idea of brick and mortar even sounds permanent as written in verse three. With resources of stone and crude oil plentiful, lofty plants were made. A city and a tower to the heavens would call attention to themselves — leaving God out of their plans. The building of a city had a selfish purpose with no regard to God's purpose to populate the earth. The people also said "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4 KJV).

God Trumps Resistance, Genesis 11: 5-9

Man's plan without God amounted to nothing, incompleteness and disobedience. God's visit to the construction site gave proof of His desire to be involved in the every day lives of the people. He offered guidance and correction then and continues today. Just as Adam and Eve sought to have God's wisdom so the generation of Noah sought God's greatness for themselves in the building of the great city and tower. With the confusing of

the language so understanding was impossible, the building project was stopped. God named the project "Babel", a name of shame referring to punishment from God. "Thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" accomplishing God's original purpose. Man's plan for unity was not God's idea of unity — one in God. Without regard for language of culture, God is the God of all.

Faith Cooperates with God's Purpose Genesis 11:27-32

Faith accomplished God's purpose as the later descendants of Noah spread over the earth. Verse 31 gives the account of Terah, Abram and Sarai and Lot going "forth from the Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran" (Genesis 11:31 KJV). Abram and Nabor were obedient as they took their wives and followed God's leading. God's grace and guidance were good for Abram as he was promised of God to be the Father of many Nations.

Moore is a member of Macedonia Church, Petal.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

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Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be

clear, sharp, and well-lighted. **Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.**

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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BFLC GSO: WXWKOOS

Clue: W=F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-Four: Forty-Five.

MS POSITIONS

STEELE BAPTIST CHURCH, FOREST, is seeking a bi-vocational music minister. Please send resumes to Steele Baptist Church, attn: personnel committee, 8977 Hwy 21 North, Forest, MS, 39074.

CLASSIFIED ADS

REASONABLY PRICED INSURANCE: Medicare supplements, major medical, & small group health insurance plans available for individuals & churches. Call Carra Turner (662) 231-4487 for rates or visit www.turnerinsuranceonline.com.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Preschool and Children, First Church, Plantersville

1. The preschool and children of First Church, Plantersville, held their Christmas party Dec. 8. Shown are the participants.

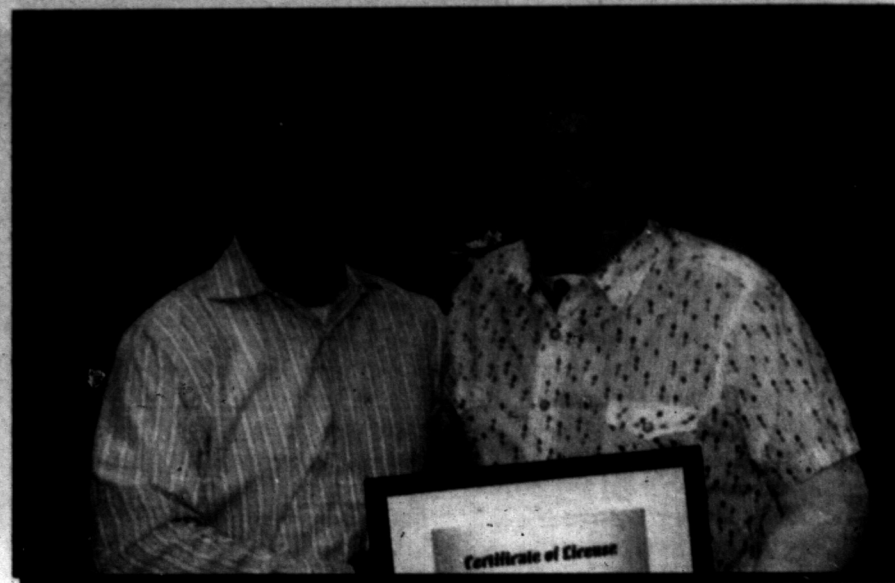
2. Briar Hill Church, Florence, recently licensed Billy Jack McDaniel to the ministry. Shown presenting the certificate is Lee Yancey, interim pastor, and McDaniel.

3. Heritage Heights Church, Laurel, participated in the Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry and collected over 100 boxes. Shown are some of the participants.

4. Ackerman Church, Ackerman, is hosting the Joyful Noise quartet and the Talley Trio Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.

5. Shane McGivney was ordained to the ministry Nov. 25. He is associate pastor of Corinth Church, Carthage. He is shown with pastor John Sharp.

6. Sylvarena Church, Smith County, ordained Chris Hennis, Josh Smith, and Tommy Boggan as deacons Dec. 2. Shown are Jerry Houston, Hennis, Smith, Boggan, and pastor Clyde Little.



2. Yancey and McDaniel, Briar Hill Church, Florence



3. Operation Christmas Child, Heritage Heights Church, Laurel



5. McGivney ordained to ministry, Corinth Church, Corinth



6. Deacon ordinations, Sylvarena Church, Smith County

COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS

1. Billy Dowdy, member of Highland Church, Vicksburg, has received a doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Seminary, San Francisco, Cal., Dec. 14.

2. Blue Mountain College is offering online courses for its spring semester. Deadline for application is Jan. 7. For more information, phone (662) 587-0922, e-mail bmconline@bmc.edu; or visit www.bmc.edu.

3. Mississippi College Singers will perform with choruses from around the state for a Jan. 13 concert at New York City's Carnegie Hall. About 40 MC students are expected to perform, along with the Mississippi School of the Arts Chorale of Brookhaven, the Mississippi Girlchoir of Jackson, and members of the Chamber Choir from St. Andrews Episcopal School, Ridgeland. James Meaders, chairman and director of choral activities with the MC Music Department will serve as guest conductor.

OBITUARY

Henning Andrews, 95, died Dec. 11 in Harker Heights, Tex. He was a graduate of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and Southern Seminary. He pastored churches in Mississippi in Lula, Peach Creek, Furrs and McCool and served over 20 years as interim pastor in Calhoun and Chickasaw Associations. He was a member of First Church, Houlka. His memorial service was held Dec. 17 at First Church, Houlka with burial in Rose Hill cemetery.

Survivors include his wife, Ella Mae Gladney Andrews of Harker Heights, Tex., his daughter Eleana Cooley and husband Ken of Belton, Tex., granddaughter Becky Cooley, Belton, niece Marie Pittman, great niece Liz Hott and great grand nephew Dakota Hott, all of Shreveport, La. He was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers.